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ABSTRACT

This curriculum unit of four lessons introduces students to traditional fables. In the unit, students learn about the qualities that make a tale a fable and read representative selections; they will also engage in storytelling activities and dramatic presentations of traditional and original fables. The following lessons are part of the unit: Fables: Comparing and Contrasting Fables; Fables: Elements of Fables; Fables: Reading a Fable; and Fables: Writing an Original Fable. In the first lesson, students will apply literal, interpretive, and critical thinking skills to two versions of a fable, while in the second lesson they will learn to identify the major elements of the genre. In the third lesson, the student will learn how to recognize the fable as a literary form and write an opinion about a fable, while in the fourth lesson students will write original fables using the stages of the writing process, and, in small groups, will perform their fables as skits. Each lesson in the unit offers an overview; suggests length and grade level; lists subjects and subtopics; cites dimensions of learning and intelligences being addressed; notes equipment and materials needed; lists teacher resources; and addresses National Standards for Arts Education. Each lesson also identifies instructional objectives and strategies; provides a detailed, step-by-step instructional plan; suggests assessment and extension activities; and lists teacher references. (NKA)

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ED 475 408

The Kennedy Center ARTSEDGE WORLDCOM

Curricula, Lessons and Activities

Curriculum Unit Detail

Fables

This unit introduces students to traditional fables. Students learn about the qualities that make a tale a fable and read representative selections. Students also engage in storytelling activities and dramatic presentations of traditional and original fables.

The following lessons are part of this unit:

- Fables: Comparing and Contrasting Fables
- Fables: Elements of Fables
- Fables: Reading a Fable
- Fables: Writing an Original Fable

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The Kennedy Center ARTSEDGE WORLDCOM

Curricula, Lessons and Activities

Fables: Comparing and Contrasting Fables
(Part of Curriculum Unit Fables)

Resource Type: lesson

Length: Two to three 45-minute sessions

Grade: 6,7,8

Subjects: Language Arts, Visual Arts

Subtopics: Drawing, English, Graphics, Literature

Intelligences Being Addressed:

- Interpersonal Intelligence
- Intrapersonal Intelligence
- Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence
- Visual/Spatial Intelligence

Dimensions of Learning:

- Acquisition and integration of knowledge
- Attitudes and perceptions about learning
- Extension and refinement of knowledge
- Meaningful use of knowledge
- Productive habits of the mind

Overview: In this lesson, students will apply literal, interpretive, and critical

thinking skills to two versions of a fable. Students will also draw a cartoon to illustrate the moral of one of the fables they read.

Equipment:

- Computer : Mac or PC with Internet access

Media & Materials:

Printouts: This lesson does not have any printouts.

Student Supplies: Paper, pens, and/or pencils
Markers

Other Materials: Copies of "The Fox and the Crow" by James Thurber and Aesop (*Reading Literature*, pages 9 and 13-14; see Related Texbooks section for complete bibliographic information.)

Examples of illustrations by James Thurber (optional; see Teacher References section for suggested resources)

Related Textbooks: Chaparro, Jacqueline L. and Mary Ann Trost. *Reading Literature*. Evanston, IL: McDougal, Littell & Company, 1989.

Teacher Internet Resources:

Lesson and Extension Specific Resources:

- **Aesop's Fables Online**
  http://www.aesopfables.com/

  While difficult to navigate, this site provides comprehensive information on Aesop and his fables. Abbreviated versions of the fables are accompanied by artwork, and sometimes audio recordings. The site also includes lesson plans.

- **Online Literature Library: Fables**
  http://www.literature.org/authors/aesop/fables/

  This site includes the life and history of Aesop,

accompanied by the full text collection of his fables.

General Internet Resources:

- **ArtsEdNet at the Getty Institute: Lesson Plans and Curriculum Ideas**
  http://www.getty.edu/artsednet/resources/

  This section of ArtsEdNet includes a variety of teaching and learning materials, including art images. They are organized so that ArtsEdNet visitors can easily find the sort of information they want.

National Standards for Arts Education:

- 5-8 Visual Art Content Standard 1 : Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
- 5-8 Visual Art Content Standard 6 : Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

Click here for additional information on the National Standards for Arts Education

Other National Standards:

- Language Arts (Reading) #5, #6, #7

Source of Standards:

For more on the Standards in other subjects, please refer to the Mid-continent Regional Education Laboratory (McREL) website.

State Standards, if any:

To search the State Arts Standards, please visit the National Conference of State Legislatures website.

Instructional Objectives:

Students will:

- interact with the text using the following reading stances: developing interpretation and critical stance.
- use text and background knowledge to extend meaning from initial understanding, often requiring the student to revisit the text to clarify, verify, and revise his or her understanding.
- develop a critical stance by identifying and analyzing the author's perspective and craft.

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- construct, extend, and examine meaning from various orientations to text.

Strategies:

Teacher-guided discussion
Independent student work
Hands-on project

Instructional Plan:

Ask students to recall that Aesop's fables illustrate the virtues and failings of human beings. James Thurber, a humorist and cartoonist, was concerned with the problems of average people in a modern society. Thurber wrote his own version of Aesop's fable, "The Fox and the Crow." Both Aesop and Thurber dealt with the consequences of human vanity. Have students read both versions of "The Fox and the Crow," looking for similarities and differences as they read.

Have students fill in a sequence chain of events for both versions of the fable. Compare the two chains of events. What changes has Thurber made? Using a Venn diagram, compare and contrast the two versions:

In Thurber's telling, the fox must flatter the crow twice to get the cheese. The first time, the crow is smart enough to hold the cheese in his claw while he talks. Later, the crow voluntarily gives up the cheese instead of letting it drop accidentally. Unlike Aesop's crow, the crow in Thurber's version of the fable speaks to the fox. Also, Aesop's crow is a female; Thurber's crow is male. Thurber makes the same point in the end that Aesop makes; flattery or boasting can lead to a person's undoing.

Have students explain the use of the following literary terms: allusion, personification, and a moral. Ask students to compare and contrast the use of these three techniques in the two fables.

allusion: Thurber refers to Aesop and La Fontaine, two other creators of fables.

personification: In Aesop's fable, the fox represents slyness, and the crow represents vanity. In Thurber's fable, both the fox and the crow seem smarter and more suspicious at first. However, in the end, the crow gives away most of the cheese

to ensure an audience for his boasting, showing that he is just as vain.

moral: Thurber's moral could be stated in the following ways:

- "You lose more than you gain by boasting."
- "Vanity makes you forget common sense."
- "Don't trust anyone who encourages boasting."

Explain to students that James Thurber was a famous illustrator, as well as a writer. He drew cartoons and illustrations in a minimalist style. If possible, show students some examples of Thurber's drawings. Ask students to choose one of the morals from Thurber's version of "The Fox and the Crow" and draw an illustration to represent that moral. If the students have seen examples of Thurber's work, challenge them to try to draw in the style of Thurber. When students finish their drawings, they should write the moral underneath their pictures as a caption.

Assessment: Students will be evaluated through their participation in and completion of the activities. Also, a test can be given in which the students compare and contrast Aesop's and Jean de La Fontaine's version of "The Fox and the Grapes."

Extensions:

1. Encourage students to read other stories by James Thurber, such as "The Thirteen Clocks" and "The Wonderful O." They may wish to illustrate one or more scenes from the stories they read or write brief summaries.

2. Students may enjoy Arnold Lobel's modern (and often humorous) tales in his book *Fables*.

3. Have students ask their parents whether they have seen any of James Thurber's drawings or read any of his stories or cartoons. What do they think about his work?

4. Tell students that a moral presented on its own—outside the context of a story—is called a proverb. For example, a person might say "Flattery is the best persuasion" without telling the fable of "The Fox and the Crow." Another proverb about flattery

is "Flattery will get you nowhere." Ask students which they believe is true. Can both proverbs be true? Ask students to explain their position in one or more paragraphs. Remind them to complete the stages in the process of writing: prewriting, drafting, revising, and proofreading.

5. Have students compare and contrast "The Ant and the Grasshopper" and "The Shepherd Boy" as retold by Joseph Jacobs. The first fable has animal characters; the second uses human characters. Ask students whether one of the fables is more effective than the other. Why or why not?

Teacher References:

Lobel, Arnold. *Fables*. New York: Harper Collins Juvenile Books, 1980.

Thurber, James. Garrison Keillor (Editor). *James Thurber: Writings and Drawings*. New York: Library of America, 1996.

Thurber, James. *Fables For Our Time, and Famous Poems Illustrated*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1940.

Author :

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Thomas Pullen Arts Magnet School
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Review Date:

ARTSEDGENotes:

The Kennedy Center ARTSEDGE WORLDCOM

Curricula, Lessons and Activities

Fables: Elements of Fables
(Part of Curriculum Unit Fables)

Resource Type: lesson

Length: Two to three 45-minute class periods

Grade: 6,7,8

Subjects: Language Arts

Subtopics: English, Literature

Intelligences Being Addressed:
- Interpersonal Intelligence
- Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence

Dimensions of Learning:
- Acquisition and integration of knowledge
- Meaningful use of knowledge
- Productive habits of the mind

Overview: The student will be introduced to fables and learn to identify the major elements of the genre. Students will also learn about the oral tradition of telling fables.

Equipment:

- Computer : Mac or PC with Internet access

Media & Materials:

Printouts: This lesson does not have any printouts.

Student Supplies: None

Other Materials: Copies of Aesop's fable, "The Cat and the Mice." (See Teacher References section for complete bibliographic information.)

Related Textbooks: None

Teacher Internet Resources:

Lesson and Extension Specific Resources:

- **Aesop's Fables Online**
  http://www.aesopfables.com/

  While difficult to navigate, this site provides comprehensive information on Aesop and his fables. Abbreviated versions of the fables are accompanied by artwork, and sometimes audio recordings. The site also includes lesson plans.

- **Online Literature Library: Fables**
  http://www.literature.org/authors/aesop/fables/

  This site includes the life and history of Aesop, accompanied by the full text collection of his fables.

General Internet Resources:

- **Folktale Links**
  http://www.muw.edu/~kdunk/folk.html

  This comprehensive list provides resources containing material regarding traditional and international folktales and

fairy tales, including the Brothers Grimm, Cinderella, creation stories, and Scottish folktales.

National Standards for Arts Education:

- 5-8 Theatre Content Standard 2 : Acting by developing basic acting skills to portray characters who interact in improvised and scripted scenes

Click here for additional information on the National Standards for Arts Education

Other National Standards:

- Language Arts : Reading #5, #6

Source of Standards: ArtsEdge, McREL

For more on the Standards in other subjects, please refer to the Mid-continent Regional Education Laboratory (McREL) website.

State Standards, if any:

To search the State Arts Standards, please visit the National Conference of State Legislatures website.

Instructional Objectives: Students will:

- interact with the text using the four reading stances: global understanding, developing interpretation, personal reflections and responses, and critical stance.
- activate prior knowledge and relate it to the reading selection.
- identify meanings of terms unique to literary language.
- identify major elements of a literary selection.
- relate literature to one's own life.
- demonstrate grade-level proficiency to read for literary experience using before, during, and after strategies.

Strategies:

Teacher-guided instruction
Teacher-led discussion
Class presentations
Creative writing
Imaginative thinking

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Instructional Plan:

1. Ask students if they have ever read a fable. If so, have them share their prior knowledge of this genre. Explain that fables come from the oral tradition of storytelling found in folklore around the world. Give some background on the history of storytelling. Point out that many fables were eventually written down.

2. Share with students that fables are a special kind of tale. In most fables, animal characters act like humans (personification). Explain that a fable teaches a moral (or lesson) about humans. Emphasize that a moral is drawn from what happens in a fable. Have students read "The Cat and the Mice" by Aesop. Discuss the events and call attention to its moral.

3. Review with students the elements of a fable: characters, setting, events and a moral. In most fables the characters are animals. These animals usually represent specific human qualities. The characters are one-sided. They act and talk in a way that shows one quality, such as greed or cleverness. For example, the young mouse in "The Cat and the Mice" might represent cleverness. Discuss personification. Ask students for examples of personification from cartoons and TV commercials.

4. Review the concept of a moral. Tell students that fables are meant to teach a lesson or moral. The moral is usually revealed at the end of the fable. Sometimes the moral is delivered as a statement, such as "Be happy with what you have," or "It is easier to think up a plan than to carry it out."

5. Tell students that fables are meant to be heard time and time again. It is usually easier to appreciate and understand a fable if you hear it more than once. The first time, you enjoy the story. The second time, you can study the characters and find the lesson taught about human nature. Point out to students that storytellers told fables over and over again. As they were retold over the years, they evolved in content, emphasis, and style. To illustrate the process of adaptation by individual storytellers, have several volunteers retell the story of "The Cat and the Mice." Allow them to change details but not the main point. Explain that the process of retelling stories resulted in different versions of the same fable.

6. Have the class engage in a storytelling activity. Ask students to imagine that they are spellbinding tellers of tales. Have them choose a favorite fable and retell it in their own words before a group. Before they retell the fable, students should list the events in the fable in the order in which they occur on a sheet of paper or

on note cards. They may use the list or note cards to practice telling the fable. As they deliver their fables, ask each student to vary his or her presentation. For example, tell them to change their pitch or volume of voice, or the speed of delivery.

Assessment: Student evaluation will be based on the student's responses to comprehension questions posed by the teacher and a short written quiz on the subject, developed by the teacher.

Extensions: None

Teacher References: Zipes, Jack (ed.) and J. J. Grandville (ill.). *Aesops Fables*. "The Cat and the Mice." New York: New American Library, 1992. p.183.

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Review Date:

ARTSEDGENotes:

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Curricula, Lessons and Activities

Fables: Reading a Fable
(Part of Curriculum Unit Fables)

Resource Type: lesson

Length: Two 45-minute class periods

Grade: 6,7,8

Subjects: Language Arts

Subtopics: English, Literature

Intelligences Being Addressed:
- Interpersonal Intelligence
- Intrapersonal Intelligence
- Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence

Dimensions of Learning:
- Acquisition and integration of knowledge
- Meaningful use of knowledge
- Productive habits of the mind

Overview: The student will be able to recognize the fable as a literary form; apply literal, interpretative, and critical thinking skills to fables; write an opinion about a fable; recognize personification; and

explain a moral.

Equipment:

- Computer : Mac or PC with Internet access

Media & Materials:

Printouts: This lesson has printouts. They are referenced in the "Student Supplies" or "Other Materials" sections below.

Student Supplies: None

Other Materials: Copies of Aesop's fables, "The Fox and the Crow" and "The Fox and the Grapes" (pages 8-12 in *Reading Literature*; see Related Textbooks section for complete bibliographic information.)

Handout with questions for students

Related Textbooks: Chaparro, Jacqueline L. and Mary Ann Trost. *Reading Literature.* Evanston, IL: McDougal, Littell & Company, 1989.

Teacher Internet Resources: **Lesson and Extension Specific Resources:**

- **Aesop's Fables Online**
  http://www.aesopfables.com/

  While difficult to navigate, this site provides comprehensive information on Aesop and his fables. Abbreviated versions of the fables are accompanied by artwork, and sometimes audio recordings. The site also includes lesson plans.

- **Online Literature Library: Fables**
  http://www.literature.org/authors/aesop/fables/

  This site includes the life and history of Aesop, accompanied by the full text collection of his fables.

General Internet Resources:

- **Folktale Links**
  http://www.muw.edu/~kdunk/folk.html

  This comprehensive list provides resources containing material regarding traditional and international folktales and fairy tales, including the Brothers Grimm, Cinderella, creation stories, and Scottish folktales.

National Standards for Arts Education:

- 5-8 Theatre Content Standard 2 : Acting by developing basic acting skills to portray characters who interact in improvised and scripted scenes
- 5-8 Theatre Content Standard 7 : Analyzing, evaluating, and constructing meanings from improvised and scripted scenes and from theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions

Click here for additional information on the National Standards for Arts Education

Other National Standards:

- Language Arts #1, #2, #3, #5, #6, #7

Source of Standards: ArtsEdge, McREL

For more on the Standards in other subjects, please refer to the Mid-continent Regional Education Laboratory (McREL) website.

State Standards, if any:

To search the State Arts Standards, please visit the National Conference of State Legislatures website.

Instructional Objectives: Students will:

- read for literary experience.
- activate prior knowledge and relate it to the reading selection.
- identify text according to genre: fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and drama.
- identify major elements of a literary selection.
- respond to literature through writing and discussion.
- demonstrate grade-level proficiency to read for literary

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experience using before, during, and after strategies.

Strategies:

Teacher-led discussion
Cooperative pairs
Questioning
Writing to inform
Individual student work

Instructional Plan:

As a warm-up, ask students to think of different ways that they have tried to acquire something they really want. Prompt them with questions such as the following:

- Have you ever used flattery to get something you wanted?
- Did the person you flattered grant your request?
- What other methods have you used to get something you really wanted?

Divide the class into pairs and have the students engage in an improvisation activity. The students should think of a scenario in which one person wants very badly to obtain something (tickets to a rock concert, a tasty dessert, an extension for a homework assignement, etc.). The other person has the power to grant or deny the request. The first person's job is to convince his or her partner to grant the wish. Allow students to improvise for about a minute. Then, tell the students to switch places in the scene, with the other student trying to convince his or her partner to fulfill the request. (The student can choose a different desire to pursue.) Again, allow the students time to improvise for about a minute.

Bring the students back into the group and have them discuss the exercise. What techniques did they use to convice their partners to grant their desires? Did they use flattery? Humor? Begging? Bargaining? Intimidation? Which strategies were most successful?

Have the students read two Aesop's fables, "The Fox and the Crow" and "The Fox and the Grapes." Tell them to think about the warm-up questions and excercise as they read. Following the reading, help develop comprehension skills by having students answer the questions about the fables on the accompanying handout.

As a closing activity, ask students to imagine that the crow was too smart to fall for the fox's flattery. Have each student think up

one humorous line the fox might use to get the crow to drop the cheese. Re-read the story to the class using some of the students' lines. After doing this, ask the students to write an alternative conclusion in which the crow eats all of the cheese instead of dropping it.

Assessment: Student evaluation will be based on the student's response to the comprehension questions, and understanding of vocabulary and literary terms.

Extensions:

1. Encourage the students to read other fables by Aesop. Allow time to share them with the class, challenging the other students to figure out the moral before it is stated.

2. Have students read fables from other cultures, such as "Two Ways to Count to Ten," a Liberian fable (pages 20-26 in *Reading Literature*). Discuss the moral.

Teacher References: None

Author : Kathy Cook
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Review Date:

ARTSEDGENotes:

Questions on "The Fox and the Grapes" and "The Fox and the Crow"

1. In "The Fox and the Crow," does the fox believe all of the complimentary things he says about the crow?

2. Is a crow usually considered to have a beautiful voice?

3. Do you think the fox in "The Fox and the Crow" would have been successful if he had threatened the crow?

4. Can you think of any other ways the fox could have gotten the cheese?

5. Write down the main events in "The Fox and the Grapes" in sequential order.

6. In "The Fox and the Grapes," does the fox have proof that the grapes are sour?

7. Why does he say that they are?

8. What do you think of the fox's reaction in "The Fox and the Grapes"?

9. What else might he have done once he realized he could not reach the grapes?

10. Each animal character in "The Fox and the Crow" represents a particular human quality. Which of the following qualities do you think each character stands for? Give reasons for your answer. (If you do not know the meanings of these words, look them up in a dictionary):

- slyness
- greed
- determination
- gullibility
- vanity

11. Personification is the technique of giving human qualities to an object, animal, or idea. Consider the fox in "The Fox and the Grapes." Would a real fox act like the fox in the fable? Can you imagine a person acting as the fox did? Explain your answers.

12. A moral is the lesson taught by a story. The moral of "The Fox and the Grapes" is suggested but not stated directly. In your own words, state the general lesson taught in this fable.

Elements of the Writing Process: Writing Activity

Now that you have read Jean de La Fontaine's poem "The Fox and the Grapes," try to compose a poetic version of Aesop's fable "The Fox and the Crow." Use the elements of the writing process, outlined below, as you write your poem.

1. Prewriting

Plan how you might imitate some or all three of the methods La Fontaine used:

- Use specific words.
- Appeal to the reader's senses; draw pictures with words.
- Include some rhymes, if possible.

2. Drafting

Begin to put your ideas on paper. Add to and change your prewriting notes as you work.

3. Revising

Revise your drafts of the poem to make the wording exact and smooth.

4. Proofreading

Check for mechanical errors.

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Curricula, Lessons and Activities

Fables: Writing an Original Fable
(Part of Curriculum Unit Fables)

Resource Type: lesson

Length: Three 45-minute class periods

Grade: 6,7,8

Subjects: Language Arts

Subtopics: English, Literature

Intelligences Being Addressed:
- Interpersonal Intelligence
- Intrapersonal Intelligence
- Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence

Overview: Students will write original fables using the stages of the writing process and, in small groups, will perform their fables as skits.

Equipment:
- Computer : Mac or PC with Internet access

Media & Materials:

Printouts: This lesson has printouts. They are referenced in the "Student Supplies" or "Other Materials" sections below.

Student Supplies: None

Other Materials:

- Copies of *Aesop's Fables*. (See Teacher References and Teacher Internet Resources sections for more information.)
- Copies of Jean de La Fontaine's poem, "The Fox and the Grapes" (optional).
- Handout: Writing Process (optional).
- Images of Edward Hicks's painting, *Peaceable Kingdom* (optional).

Related Textbooks: None

Teacher Internet Resources:

Lesson and Extension Specific Resources:

- **Aesop's Fables Online**
  http://www.aesopfables.com/

  While difficult to navigate, this site provides comprehensive information on Aesop and his fables. Abbreviated versions of the fables are accompanied by artwork, and sometimes audio recordings. The site also includes lesson plans.

- **Online Literature Library: Fables**
  http://www.literature.org/authors/aesop/fables/

  This site includes the life and history of Aesop, accompanied by the full text collection of his fables.

General Internet Resources:

- **Folktale Links**
  http://www.muw.edu/~kdunk/folk.html

  This comprehensive list provides resources containing material regarding traditional and international folktales and

fairy tales, including the Brothers Grimm, Cinderella, creation stories, and Scottish folktales.

National Standards for Arts Education:

- 5-8 Theatre Content Standard 1 : Script writing by the creation of improvisations and scripted scenes based on personal experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history
- 5-8 Theatre Content Standard 2 : Acting by developing basic acting skills to portray characters who interact in improvised and scripted scenes

Click here for additional information on the National Standards for Arts Education

Other National Standards:

- Language Arts : Writing, #1, #2, #3

Source of Standards: ArtsEdge, McREL

For more on the Standards in other subjects, please refer to the Mid-continent Regional Education Laboratory (McREL) website.

State Standards, if any:

To search the State Arts Standards, please visit the National Conference of State Legislatures website.

Instructional Objectives: Students will:

- write to express personal ideas.
- pre-write, draft, revise, and proofread as part of a strategic approach to effective writing.
- focus on sentence form, word choice, grammar, usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
- use the stages of the writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising, and proofreading.
- demonstrate grade-level proficiency in writing to express personal ideas by being able to do the following: choose a literary form, using its appropriate elements to create a complete whole; follow a plan in which ideas are logically ordered; direct writing to the intended audience; and frequently choose vocabulary to clarify and enhance the form selected using language purposefully.

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Strategies:

Teacher-directed instruction
Creative writing
Independent activity
Peer exchange and evaluation
Group project
Cooperative learning

Instructional Plan:

1. Reviewing the elements of a fable

Review the elements of a fable (characters, setting, events and moral) with students. Then ask students to write a paragraph showing why "The Fox and the Crow" or "The Fox and the Grapes" can be called a fable.

Review the writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, and proofreading) and have students use it as they write their paragraph.

Pre-writing

Suggest that the students divide a piece of paper into two columns. In the first column, they should list the elements of a fable; in the second column, they should list the characteristics of their chosen fable that reflect these elements.

Drafting

Suggest that the students refer to their charts as they write their first drafts.

Revising

Students should work in pairs as they revise their drafts.

Proofreading

Remind students to check spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and word usage.

Work with students to develop a checklist or chart outlining the elements of a fable and the outcomes desired when writing a fable.

2. Updating a fable

Review with students the fables they have read. Before students proceed with writing steps, discuss different ways in which each fable might be updated (for example, the characters might be portrayed as animal characters in a television sitcom or cartoon show). As students present their ideas for updating the fable, write these ideas on the board to help the students who may have more difficulty imagining these fables in a modern setting.

Prewriting

Tell students to make these entries on a planning list:

- Characters (for example, a cat and a dog)
- Setting (for example, a vacant lot)
- Events (for example, a dog encounters a cat who has a piece of meat)
- Moral (for example, pick on animals your own size)

Encourage students to follow the order of the original fable of the order of events they listed and to begin writing a first draft.

Drafting

Direct students to follow the order of the original fable or the order of events they listed and to begin writing a first draft.

Revising

Have students pair up and help revise each other's drafts, using the checklist or chart created with the hel of the teacher.

Proofreading

Students should check spelling, capitalization, punctuation and word usage.

3. Writing an original fable

Using the stages of the writing process, have students write an original fable that teaches one of the following morals:

- Pride leads to a fall.
- The early bird catches the worm.
- Haste makes waste.

- A stitch in time saves nine.
- Don't count your chickens before they hatch.
- Honesty is the best policy.
- You can't judge a book by its cover.
- Look before you leap.

Before they begin writing, have students choose one of the fables and determine the point that it tries to make. If necessary, narrate a fable with animal or human characters involved in the situation in which the moral applies. Remind students that the the action of the plot lead up to the lesson of the moral.

When students complete the writing process for their fables, have them split up into small groups to perform the fables. The author of each fable should serve as the narrator, with other students portraying the key characters. Allow time for the students to rehearse.

Have students perform their fables for the class. If time is limited, each small group should choose one fable to perform.

Assessment: The students will be evaluated on their written responses to the activities and on the completion of their original fable, as well as their participation in the small-group performance.

Extensions:

1. Writing a fable as a poem

Students read Jean de La Fontaine's poetic version of "The Fox and the Grapes." Point out how La Fontaine uses detailed and specific word choices, as well as rhyming, to enhance the fable.

Have students rewrite Aesop's fable, "The Fox and the Crow," as a poem, following the instructions on the accompanying handout.

2. Using art as inspiration for an original fable

Show students a print of *Peaceable Kingdom* by Edward Hicks. Hicks lived during the optimistic years of American independence (1780-1849). His paintings depict an ideal world in which all creatures live in harmony. His "Peaceable Kingdom" is one of more than 100 different versions he painted to illustrate the Old Testament prophecy: "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb; and leopards shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them" (Isaiah 11:6).

He gave his paintings to friends as tokens of peace and friendship to hang in their homes.

Ask students to study the print of *Peaceable Kingdom* and choose one or two of the animals pictured in the painting. Describe what human quality (or qualities) the animal or animals seem to have. Students then write a fable about the animal they have picked. As a prewriting activity, students list the important events in their fables and write the moral of the fable. After the fable is written, each student's work should be reviewed by a partner. Each student should comment on his/her partner's choice of details and on the events and moral. Taking their partners comments into consideration, students should make appropriate revisions.

Teacher References:

de la Fontaine, Jean and Sir Edward Marsh (trans.). *Fables*. New York: Everymans Library, 2001.

Zipes, Jack (ed.) and J. J. Grandville (ill.). *Aesops Fables*. New York: New American Library, 1992.

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